THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) There is a proposal to avail of consultancy services of M/s. SSP of Malaysia in respect of double tracking of Ipoh Padang Besar Railway Line Project to be undertaken by IRCON.

(b) The news item published in 'Jansatta' of 23rd February, 2002 is in the notice of the Ministry.

(c) The procedure is being followed. The proposal to consider M/s. SSP has been approved by the Board of Directors of IRCON International Ltd.

(d) At present, sixty four projects are being run by IRCON. Prequalification/bids have been submitted by IRCON for 20 projects.

Second Railway Bridge on Birupa and Mahanadi

2163. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the second bridge at Birupa and Mahanadi is a serious bottleneck towards any development of Railways in Orissa;

(b) if so, whether the railways have identified this problem and taken any steps in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, work of construction of 2nd bridges on Birupa and Mahanadi rivers has been included in the budget. The work would be completed in the coming years as per availability of resources.

Termination of Contract between CONCOR and CIMMCO

2164. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that CONCOR has decided to terminate Trunche II contract awarded to M/s. CIMMCO Birla Limited (CIMMCO), for procurement of wagons under World Bank aided project;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) the amount paid as advance for M/s. CIMMCO Birla Limited and the loss sustained in this contract?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) Yes, Sir. The contract for supply of 1500 Bogie Container Flat Wagons awarded to M/s. CIMMCO Birla Limited (CIMMCO) in January 1999 under the World Bank aided project was cancelled in October 2000 after M/s. Cimmco Birla Ltd. supplied 180 wagons only.

(b) The contract was cancelled as M/s. Cimmco Birla Ltd. failed to adhere to the terms of the contract.

(c) The advances paid were US$ 3 million and Rs. 20.78 crores against Bank Guarantees for equivalent amounts. The amounts of advance paid to M/s. Cimmco Birla Ltd. against the Contract were recovered from the Bank Guarantees. For other losses suffered by Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR) on account of the delay in supplies, CONCOR has preferred a claim on M/s. Cimmco Birla Ltd., which is pending before an Arbitration Tribunal.

Laying of OFC by Railtel

2165. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated amount required for completion of the project for laying optional (optical) fibre network;

(b) whether Railtel Corporation has approached the railway public sector undertakings to become equity partners to finance the project; and

(c) if so, the amount to be contributed by each of the undertakings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) The Detailed Project Report envisages an estimated expenditure of Rs. 2500 crore (approximately) for creation of 35,000 route km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) based network.

(b) Yes, Sir. As per the decision of the Cabinet, Railtel Corporation of India Limited (RCIL) has approached Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under the administrative control of Ministry of Railways to become equity partners.

(c) The Railway PSUs *viz.* Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), Container Corporation of India Limited (CONCOR) & IRCON International Limited (IRCON) will contribute Rs. 100 crore, Rs. 25 crore and Rs. 25 crore respectively for taking RCIL's equity.